

Following Florida's return of \$1 million in health care funds Florida Democrats ask state "What's Next?"

Earlier this week Florida insurance commissioner Kevin McCarty announced that he was returning \$1 million in federal grant money awarded to the state to help hold insurance companies accountable and make sure that the health care plans offered under health care reform (the Affordable Care Act) would be affordable for Florida families. Governor Scott also stated that he was not going to spend his time implementing the new law and hoped that it would be repealed or ruled unconstitutional.

This begs the question, if Florida's insurance commissioner and Governor are returning \$1 million meant to help Floridians afford insurance, what's next?

Florida's Democratic delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives wants to know, will Florida decline to enforce new consumer protections that:

- Allow young adults to stay on their parent's plan until age 26?
- Prevent insurance companies from placing a lifetime limit on how much care they will provide?
- Require insurance companies to cover recommended preventive services, like mammograms and flu shots, without cost sharing?
- Require insurance companies to spend at least 80 to 85 percent of premium dollars on health care rather than CEO salaries, bonuses, and corporate profits?

We want to know: Will Florida stop its effort to build a new, competitive, private health insurance marketplace for consumers that provides lower costs, one-stop insurance shopping, and greater benefits and protections?

Will the state of Florida stop participating in the Early Retiree Reinsurance program?

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20): *“Thousands of hard working Florida families are struggling to afford health care and millions more don’t have coverage for even basic medical expenses, let alone major illnesses. With their decision, Gov. Scott and Insurance Commissioner McCarty have turned their backs on millions of Floridians trying to protect their families. Slow-walking the implementation of the health care reform law shows a shocking lack of awareness of the health care needs of Florida working families and small business owners, but it also shows a shocking lack of fiscal responsibility. Why they are returning \$1 million to anyone when the state faces a \$3.6 billion shortfall is beyond me.”*

Rep. Alcee Hastings (FL-23): *“Despite Judge Vinson’s recent ruling and in light of Wednesday’s Senate vote against repeal, the Affordable Care Act remains the law of the land. Does Governor Scott want to deny Floridians all the new protections and benefits of the health care law by suspending its implementation indefinitely? To add insult to injury, Insurance Commissioner McCarty has returned a \$1 million health care grant given to Florida to help inform consumers of the rates of large-group insurers. This is certainly not ‘getting to work’ and truly irresponsible.”*

Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-03): *“In all my years of service, I have worked to make affordable, quality health care available for ALL Americans. Indeed, for nearly a century, leaders across the political spectrum, beginning with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Social Security Act of 1935, have fought for health care and health insurance reform. Apparently, Governor Scott is not only opposed to expanding access to health care for the people of Florida, but also to the numerous beneficial provisions already enacted in the law which greatly benefits Florida residents. These include the prohibition of the denial of coverage to children excluded due to pre-existing conditions, extending coverage to young adults up to age 26, a gradual closing of the prescription drug donut hole for Florida seniors, just to name a few.”*

Rep. Kathy Castor (FL-11): *“Most hardworking families have no idea that only 65 percent to 70 percent of their premiums and copayments are devoted to medical services. The new requirement for 80 percent to 85 percent was adopted to protect consumers and prevent money that rightfully should be devoted to health care from being siphoned off by administrative costs, advertising and CEO salaries. Under the Act, states are given the responsibility to protect consumers and ensure that health insurance pays for medical care. Yet, Commissioner McCarty has decided that the State of Florida will abdicate this responsibility. I urge Commissioner McCarty to reconsider his decision. Florida must move ahead to protect families and consumers.”*

Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-19): *“Governor Scott and the insurance commissioner’s decision to return this funding is pure political showmanship at the expense of our small businesses and working families. In Florida, health insurance premiums have skyrocketed by nearly 40 percent in the last decade, shrinking the paychecks of our workers, stifling the profits of our small businesses, and stunting our economic growth. With the unnecessary suspension of the law’s implementation, Floridians deserve to know what else in the law will not be enforced, from the requirement insurance companies cover children with preexisting conditions to the new rules forbidding insurers from charging exorbitant fees for mammograms, flu shots, and other preventative services.”*

Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17): *“With over 3,500 Floridians losing their health coverage every week, Governor Scott and the insurance commissioner’s decision to reject these critical funds is wrong and unwise. Will he also decline to implement protections such as allowing young adults to stay on their parents’ plans until age 26 or requiring insurance companies to cover mammograms and prostate exams? These are crucial reforms that are needed without delay and I urge the Governor to reconsider his decision.”*

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